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## **Intrahousehold Relationships and Decision-making in Extended Households of the Luguru Community**

By Kamille De Backer<sup>1</sup>, Nathalie Holvoet<sup>2</sup>, Mursali Milanzi<sup>3</sup>

### **Abstract**

This article analyses intrahousehold decision-making in extended households of the matrilinear Luguru community in the Morogoro Region of Tanzania. Our research focuses on the participation of adult “extended” household members, mainly relatives such as in-laws, grandparents, and cousins, in household decision-making. It complements studies that conceptualise household decision-making as a bargaining process between two decision-makers. We explore whether factors such as age, education, life cycle and gender play a role in this process. As decision-making processes often vary depending on the decision-making area, we differentiate between seven broad decision-making fields which are relevant in their respective settings. Our study adopts a qualitative approach and mainly draws upon data from primary sources, including expert interviews, life stories, participatory spider diagram exercises, and participant observation. The findings underscore the complexity of decision-making in extended household structures, with some decisions taking place within sub-units and others at the extended household level. The involvement of “extended” household members also differs according to different decision-making domains. Participation is overall more pronounced in the areas of agriculture (particularly minor decisions), money management, and child and family matters in comparison to employment outside the household and more generally labour allocation, and access/control over land/assets. Factors such as age, education level, gender, and life-cycle position of the “extended” household member are important to consider; an intersectional perspective is necessary for studies that aim to unravel intrahousehold decision-making processes.

*Keywords:* Extended households, Intrahousehold relationships, Decision-making, Gender, Matrilineality, Lugur

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## Introduction

Intrahousehold decision-making literature is a theoretically well-grounded field in development studies and feminist economics (Agarwal, 1997; Debnath, 2015; Holvoet, 2005a, 2005b). Since the 1980s, policymakers and practitioners have increasingly acknowledged the importance of investigating what happens inside the household as a result of mounting evidence of failing interventions which ignored intrahousehold allocation and decision-making processes. There has also been a shift in the field of economics from unitary (Becker, 1981) to collective preference household models (Alderman, Chiappori, Haddad, Hoddinott, & Kanbur, 1995; Browning & Chiappori, 1998). While the former, consider the household to be a unit with a benevolent head who takes the preferences of other household members into account, the latter see the household as an institution characterized by a struggle between cooperation and conflict (Sen, 1990). While different household members may collaborate in many areas, they do not necessarily have similar preferences regarding the allocation of consumption or production factors such as labour. A bargaining process in which different members' *threat points* or fall-back positions is what decides whose preferences prevail (Chiappori, 1988; Lundberg & Pollak, 1993; Manser & Brown, 1980; McElroy & Horney, 1981).

The term 'fall-back position' refers to the maximum well-being one can achieve without collaboration with the other party and other important contributing factors including non-wage income (e.g., inheritance), wage-income, social networks, and contextual factors such as gender-related laws (e.g., divorce laws), norms, and practices, etc. Specifically focusing on a rural context, Agarwal (1997) identifies eight factors that are thought to influence one's bargaining position. These include arable land, which is a valuable asset in most developing countries; access to employment and other income-earning means; access to communal resources such as village commons and state forests; access to traditional social support systems such as patronage, kinship and even friendship as well as the state and NGO as external systems of potential support. Finally, social perceptions in relation to needs, contributions, and other determinants of deservedness can also play a role. These perceptions relate to the influence of social norms, which can affect subsistence distribution in two ways: They can influence it directly, considering that intrahousehold allocation and bargaining power depend on perceptions and dominant norms, or they can alter subsistence distribution in an indirect way by affecting all the other factors (Agarwal, 1997).

Over time several alternative bargaining models have been developed with slightly different views of the bargaining 'game', yet they are all similar in that they only consist of two decision-makers: husband and wife. However, households, particularly in rural areas of developing countries, often consist of multiple members and/or generations (Bayudan-Dacuycuy, 2012; Chang, Chen, & Somerville, 2003; Doss, 2013), which is also the case in Tanzania (Creighton & Omari, 1995; Van Aelst & Holvoet, 2018). According to Chant and McIlwaine (2009), complex or extended compositions 'refer to those households which, in addition to containing a parent/parents and children, include one or more relatives such as in-laws, grandparents, cousins' (Chant & McIlwaine, 2009, p. 239). Notwithstanding some noteworthy exceptions (Bayudan-Dacuycuy, 2012; Chang et al., 2003; Doss, 2013; Guvuriro & Booysen, 2019; Lloyd, 2019; Sen, Rastogi, & Vanneman, 2006), literature still often assumes that spouses are the only participants in the bargaining process, with other household members being passive or unimportant in this process. Besides the fact that this oversight is a conceptual flaw in intrahousehold studies, it may also have implications for policies and development outcomes. Multiple studies (Alderman et al., 1995; Anderson, Reynolds, & Gugerty, 2017; Magnan, Love, Mishili, & Sheremenko, 2020) have

showcased that interventions that are drawn upon erroneous assumptions of intra-household interactions are at risk of being ineffective or counterproductive. If the household is viewed as a unit, for instance, then targeting specific members inside the household is not necessary, whereas this sort of targeting is crucial if a collective preference is valid. This is particularly important if some members' preferences are closer to those of policy makers; in such cases targeting is important to reach policy objectives. Similarly, wrongly assuming that extended households function as nuclear households, might also lead to policy failures.

Our research aims to contribute to this underexplored field of research and studies, in detail, what is happening inside the black box of extended households. It focuses specifically on intrahousehold relationships and decision-making within household structures in Tanzania that include at least one adult relative in addition to one or two parents and their offspring. In line with authors such as Randall, Coast and Leone (2011), Varley (2014), and Campbell (1995), who specifically point to the dynamic, unbounded, and non-generalisable character of Tanzanian households, we adopt a flexible and open 'household' definition, referring to the household as a residential group whose members cooperate in some household activities concerning production, consumption, reproduction, and socialisation. As households are social units that vary depending on context and culturally constructed meanings, our study focuses on extended households within one specific ethnic group, the Luguru people who are the native inhabitants of the Uluguru Mountains in Tanzania's Morogoro region.

Luguru is one of the few remaining matrilineal communities in which kinship, inheritance, and decision-making follow the female lineage (or mother's line). In matrilineal societies, women are usually the custodians of land, which belongs to the mother of the clan and passes from mother to daughter (Hamdani, 2002). Previous studies have highlighted that women from matrilineal groups tend to have a higher status compared to women from patrilineal communities, which, to some extent, may be related to land ownership, as it generally has a substantial influence on household decision-making in rural households (Doss, 2013; Friedemann-Sánchez, 2006; Hartley & Kaare, 2001; Quisumbing & Maluccio, 2000). However, in matrilineal societies it is also common for male relatives to express women's influence; fathers, uncles, brothers or sons express their influence rather than women directly. For example, Hartley and Kaare (2001) and Englert (2008) assert that even in matrilineal communities men have a more powerful position in intrahousehold decision-making. While matrilineal societies may give women a higher symbolic value, as well as greater social and material protection within the clan, senior men still dominate the decision-making processes (Clark, 2010). Some Uluguru villages practise the matrilineal kinship system as well as matrilocality, which means that the husband will move to live with his spouse and in-laws on land that is the property of the wife's clan (Englert, 2008). However, research has shown that these matrilocal practices are gradually declining, and young couples now decide their future residence on the basis of personal preferences rather than adhering to traditional practices of matrilocality (Englert, 2008; Hartley & Kaare, 2001). This change in practice also holds true for matrilineality, which is breaking down in some Uluguru villages and evolving towards a more patrilineal model. Consequently, on the ground, the patrilineal-matrilineal division is more likely to be a continuum (Englert, 2008; Hartley & Kaare, 2001; Hymas, 2000; Vardhan & Catacutan, 2017).

In addition to locally evolving practices, decision-making processes are never uniform and may vary widely depending on the domain of decision-making. This implies that the extent to which different household members participate in decision-making may vary across different areas of decision-making (Anderson et al., 2017; Holvoet, 2005a). Taking into account gender

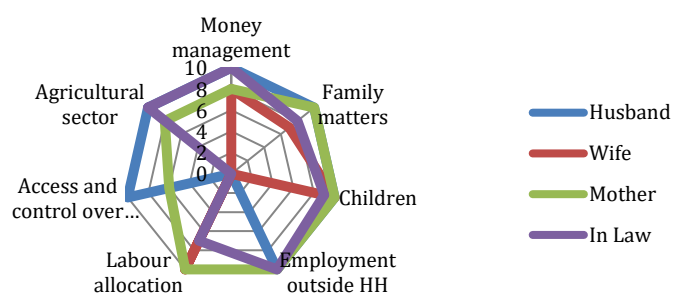
relationships, matrilineality, and the Tanzanian/Luguru context, this study sets out to examine the following research questions: i) how does decision-making take place in extended households? ii) do patterns differ between different decision-making areas, and is there an interplay with gender (both the “extended” household member and the household head)? iii) what factors do household members perceive to be influential for “extended” members’ participation in household decision-making? iv) does matrilineality matter?

## Research Methods

Our data was collected in July-August 2017 in Mlali ward, which is situated close to the Uluguru Mountains in the Mvomero district. Mlali is a semi-rural area which heavily relies on agricultural production, and the majority of its inhabitants belong to the Luguru community. We adopted a qualitative research design, which is generally used to analyse social or human problems while facilitating the interpretation of particular events (Maxwell, 2008). We purposely selected a qualitative design because it recognizes and embraces the complexity of intrahousehold decision-making, and also provides a more holistic view of these processes. Secondary data was collected by reviewing and analysing academic literature, research reports, national documents, and surveys that have been conducted in the area (e.g. Population and Housing Census, Household Budget Survey). Our study complements the existing secondary data with different types of primary data, thus allowing for cross-reading amongst different data sources. Using three different types of data collection, the first and main author collected primary data on intrahousehold allocation processes in the seven different area of decisions making. Firstly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key experts from Sokoine University of Agriculture (Morogoro) and Mzumbe University (Mzumbe main campus). In-depth interviews were also used to record life stories which help to reveal how people interpret, understand, and define the social world (Plummer, 2001). The first author and a local research assistant, who acted as a translator, recorded the life stories of 76 respondents across 12 female-headed and 12 male-headed extended households. This distinction was purposely made in order to analyse and compare gender relationships in greater depth. In this way, the study draws on a comparative method, which looks for similarities and differences in specific cultural items (Bock, 1966). Within these 24 households, we interviewed all participating adult (above the age of 18) household members including the household head, their partner, their adult children, and members of the extended household.

The second data collection method involved a participatory spider diagramming exercise (see Graph 1), which is a relationship-related participatory method that is particularly useful to detect relationships between household members (Kumar, 2002). For each of the 24 households, all adult household members jointly discussed and sketched a spider diagram to visualize the relative participation of individuals across a range of intrahousehold decision-making domains. More specifically, we selected seven areas which were considered important locally,

**Graph 1: Spider diagram HH11**



including agriculture, money management, child and family matters, labour allocation, employment outside the household, and access/control over land/assets. Finally, participant observation was used as methodological input throughout the data collection. During the fieldwork, the first author recorded information based on experiences in the field and through observation and engagement with the respondents in their natural social environment (Brewer, 2000). This enabled the researcher to complement and compare information disclosed during interviews with observations concerning household relationships in practice during the participatory spider diagram exercises.

All respondents gave permission for the interview to be recorded with a voice recorder. Subsequently, data was transferred to a laptop for transcription. Due to the language barrier, only translated versions of the interviews were analysed and coded using Nvivo software in two phases. Firstly, open coding was used, which is an ‘interpretive process by which data are broken down analytically’ (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 423). Secondly, axial coding was applied, which relates the codes to each other and identifies relationships between the open codes (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

This study had three major limitations that might have influenced the research process. Firstly, we depended on knowledge of the local research assistant and hamlet leaders to gain access to the village and the interviewees. Secondly, the language barrier was a challenge. The first author who collected the data did not speak Swahili and was therefore dependent on the interpretation and translation of a local research assistant. The final challenge was also related to the position of the main researcher. Being a young, white, Western female increased the expectations of the respondents to some extent. Several participants wanted to know what benefits their household or community would receive by engaging in the research. Furthermore, the research was not linked to a specific community development project which led some individuals to drop out. Finally, the topics of inquiry were quite sensitive which made some participants, especially women, be quite open and frank with their answers as they considered a young, white, Western female a ‘neutral outsider’ while others, especially young males, were more hesitant and uncomfortable.

## Results and Discussion

### *Decision-making at Different Levels*

In line with previous studies (Creighton & Omari, 1995), our research shows that extended household structures are complex and non-generalizable. Both female and male headed extended households often contain multiple sub-units that diverge in size and composition; spouses and their children were often considered members of the “core” household while grandparents, cousins, etc. would exist in separate sub-economies. This implies that decision-making also takes place at different levels, with some decisions being made at the level of the sub-units while others are taken at a higher (overall household) level. A son-in-law in one of the female-headed households highlights this:

*The thing is, we do things separately. [...] It is just when we have problems, we will sit down and talk about it, and of course the mother would have the final say. But in every other thing, like money and agriculture, it is just me and my wife on our own, and the mother and her husband on their own’ (HH14, female-headed, son-in-law).*

Different roles tend to be assigned to different household members depending on the unit of decision-making. In many cases, the household head first discusses an issue with their partner and/or children. Afterwards, other members of the extended household might participate in the process either directly or indirectly. Several members of extended households identified the spouse and/or children of the “core” household as an intermediary with whom they could express their opinions and ideas, which would then be passed on to the household head. All respondents, both those belonging to the “core” household as well as the “extended” household members, indicated that the latter’s role was generally to advise the household head and other “core” household members. They sketched a picture of household harmony where each person has her/his own position in the decision-making process, and where the household head has the final say in most cases. Although they emphasized the advisory role, several “extended” household members indicated varying degrees of participation. While some highlighted that they could only present an opinion, others indicated that they also had discussions with the household head in order to reach mutual agreement. In addition, some respondents, usually older members, mentioned that spouses particularly involve them when conflicts occur, in which case their opinions were highly valued.

#### *Gendered Decision-Making Patterns in Different Decision-making Domains*

As highlighted in previous studies (Anderson et al., 2017; Holvoet, 2005a), decision-making also tends to vary depending on the decision-making domain. Based on interviews with key experts we selected seven key areas and investigated the degree of participation of “extended” household members in those different areas. Given our interest in gender-differentiated patterns, we further distinguished between the gender of the “extended” members and that of the household head.

The summative overview in Table 1 clearly displays a variety in decision-making patterns across different fields of decision-making. Areas in which “extended” household members tend to participate more at the overall household level, regardless of their own gender or that of the household head, include agriculture (minor decisions), and children and family matters, while labour allocation, access/control over land and assets, and agriculture (major decisions) are topics in which their say is lesser, at least at the overall household level. Bringing in the gender dimension showcases similar patterns between male and female headed households in the areas of agriculture, money management, and children, but not access and control over assets, labour allocation, family matters, and employment outside the household where patterns diverge between male and female households.

**Table 1: Participation of “Extended” Household Members in Different Decision-making Areas in Female and Male Headed Households of the Luguru Community in Tanzania**

Decision-making areas	Female-headed households		Male-headed households	
	Female “extended” members	Male “extended” members	Female “extended” members	Male “extended” members
Agriculture	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓
Money management	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
Children	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
Family matters	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Labour allocation	X	X	X	✓
Employment outside the household	✓✓	X	✓	X
Access/control over land/assets	✓	X	X	✓

X: no participation, ✓ some participation, ✓✓ more intense participation

Source: own data

Firstly, agriculture-related decisions are a predominant area of decision-making; all households owned an agricultural plot and cultivated food crops, and approximately half of the households also cultivated cash crops. In general, the majority of “extended” household members were closely involved in minor agricultural decisions such as planting and harvesting. This was regardless of their own gender, age, position in the household, or the gender of the household head. The main reason for involvement in decision-making was their direct engagement in agricultural activities on the “core” household’s plot. In contrast, “extended” household members were usually not involved in major decisions regarding agriculture such as selling or renting a plot, marketing of crops, and distribution of the income earned. Again, as discussed above and illustrated by one of the interviewees, when “extended” members (mostly older individuals and male in-laws) owned an individual agricultural plot, they made decisions about their own plot:

*We live like two different households, but at the same place. Because we have two different land plots, so we make different decisions. I can decide what to do with my farm and my son can do the same, he has his own plot (HH17, mother of male household head)*

Secondly, in regard to money management, in ten households – five male-headed and five female-headed – “extended” household members were substantially engaged in decisions regarding money issues. Furthermore, the involvement of female “extended” household members was equal or even higher than that of male “extended” household members, with no substantial differences among female and male-headed households. This is noteworthy, considering the fact that money management is often considered a male activity (Holvoet, 2005a; Øvensen, 2010). Importantly, most of these “extended” household members contributed relatively intensively to the household in a direct way. For example, by earning income or in indirect ways, such as being engaged in agricultural work on family land. In addition, those who had income earnings also often managed their money on their own, although they often also contributed to the “core” household when necessary. Moreover, “core” household members emphasized that it was normal for in-laws



to not directly contribute to the “core” household when they have their own partner and children. One “core” son explained his brother in-law’s contribution to the household as follows:

*When the money comes, it is not mandatory for the in-law to contribute to this household. So, he might decide with the little that he has to share it with everyone, but he also has his own family [...] to look after. So, his main focus is his wife and the three children, and then come the other [core] household members (HH21, son of male household head).*

Thirdly, “extended” household members were usually highly involved in decisions regarding children when they had children or grandchildren inside the “core” household. Grandparents usually adopted an advisory role and were often heavily involved in the rearing of and caring for their grandchildren. While there are no differences between male and female headed households in decision-making about children, this does not hold for decisions regarding family matters where we noticed a higher participation of “extended” household members in male-headed (as compared to female-headed) households. However, age could be a reasonable explanation; “extended” household members in male-headed households were relatively older, and age, being associated with life experience and wisdom, was one of the main predicting factors for involvement in decisions regarding family matters. Relatively young members, and particularly in-laws, such as cousins, were less often involved. A “core” household member explains:

*The in-law is not involved in all the family matters, because [...] he came here to marry. Involving him in all the family matters would mean that they take him as blood, like a son. So, the involvement is minor rather than major (HH21, son of male household head).*

However, some of them, mainly female “extended” household members, indicated the opposite, which might be related to the influence of matrilineality (see below).

In decisions regarding labour allocation, there were some minor differences between male and female headed households. In fact, labour allocation, both in male and female headed households was not really discussed (also not among “core” household members) but mainly followed the dominant gender-differentiated task division (see also Holvoet, 2005a). While all women (both “extended” as well as “core” household members) were heavily involved in care labour, in 7 out of 24 households a male (both “extended” and “core”) household member indicated he participated. Interestingly, in our study male household members participated slightly more in care labour in male-headed than in female-headed households which is somehow counter to earlier studies which have shown female-headed households to have a more neutralizing effect on gender bias regarding labour allocation (Chant & Mellwaine, 2009).

This neutralizing effect might, however, rather hold for female (rather than male) labour allocation, as participation in paid labour outside the household was higher for female “extended” household members in female (as compared to male) headed households. Interestingly, while gender norms tend to be stickier in regard to care labour, both men and women emphasized that people should be able to work outside the household and earn money regardless of gender:

*I don’t believe that a man should be outside looking for jobs, and woman sitting inside and cooking. That was only in the past. For now, if a woman sits down and*

*waits for her husband to bring money, then he will have power to decide what to do with the money. Now women go out and look for money, like men are looking for money, so that they have freedom to decide what they want to do* (HH14 Female head).

Finally, the majority of “extended” household members indicated that they do not have any influence on decision-making regarding the “core” household’s land or other assets, except for some cases where respondents were older, or where cousins were recognized by the “core” household head as his/her own children. Interestingly, while no major differences are discernible between female and male-headed households, female “extended” members participated slightly more in female-headed households, while the reverse is true for male-headed households.

*i) Extended Household Members’ Participation in Decision-making: Influencing Factors*

Moving beyond a descriptive sketch of decision-making patterns, our study also explicitly probed into factors that influenced participation of “extended” household members in decision-making. “Extended” household members themselves indicated they participated because other household members solicited them. In most cases, they did not consider themselves to be in a position to decide about their participation: *‘I participate because the others involve me. I don’t have the position. The others have the position to include me’* (HH1, wife’s sister in male-headed household). Similarly, “extended” household members also indicated they could not refuse to participate because of their respect for “core” household members: *‘I participate out of respect. She is my mother, so I cannot act like there is nothing to discuss. I cannot say “I don’t want to discuss it”, it is not like that’* (HH19, niece1 of female head). Including each household member in decision-making processes was also often considered a social norm: *‘[Everybody] is included because they are all a part of the household. If we go through something, we go through something together’* (HH11, mother of male household head) and often linked to the maintenance of household harmony and the avoidance of conflict: *‘Because I have been participating, we are able to live together in peace. There were no arguments, no conflict. We live together as one’* (HH19, niece 1 of female household head). One woman also explained her concerns about the well-being of her niece, and how involving her in decisions regarding household matters affected this positively:

*And for the cousin, we don’t want her to feel alone. Because at some point I felt that she [niece] was isolated and she was on her own. But ever since we started to include her in some of the decisions, she feels at home. And she is more open. So she doesn’t feel as alone as she felt before* (HH18, daughter of female household head).

While there is a discourse of “harmony”, in practice, patterns of differential participation are noticeable. In line with earlier studies (see Agarwal, 1997), ownership and control of assets, and in particular house and land ownership, clearly affects a person’s participation in decision-making. However, only “extended” male and older female household members mentioned individual ownership of assets outside the household, which may seem rather odd in the context of a matrilineal community. Those who owned property, for example an agricultural plot or house, could usually make their own decisions about the specific property. Furthermore, they were more often involved in minor decision-making processes regarding “core” household assets (which they

did not own by themselves), for example what to cultivate on which household plot, but not in major decisions such as selling a piece of land.

A second influencing factor was the ability to work, whether resulting in a direct financial contribution to the “core” household, or an indirect contribution, such as providing agricultural labour. Particularly “extended” household members with individual money earnings positioned themselves relatively high on the spider diagrams in relation to decision-making domains such as money management. These findings do not come as a surprise and are largely in line with much of the academic literature (e.g. Agarwal, 1997; Antman, 2014; Fafchamps, Kebede, & Quisumbing, 2009).

A third factor which increased the participation of female and male “extended” household members was human capital, which also lends support to evidence from previous studies (Quisumbing & Maluccio, 2000). For example, having a secondary education was considered a benefit in decision-making. Moreover, the ability to give good advice strengthened a person’s position and secured participation in future decisions. Advisory skills were also often linked to age and life experience. Older people’s voices, both male and female, were generally more respected and considered wise. Therefore, they had more opportunity to present their ideas and insights in every domain, and especially regarding children and family matters. In addition, age is also related to a person’s phase in life. Other life-cycle elements shown in the data were marriage and having children. Both male and female in-laws, for example, mentioned that marriage strengthened their position within the household as other household members only tended to consider them full members after marriage. In this way, their level of participation and respect for their advice increased, as did their responsibilities. In contrast to marriage, only female “extended” household members specified that having children was a positive influential factor in their participation. These findings are in line with previous studies regarding the legitimacy of a mother’s voice (e.g. Hollos & Larsen, 2008). The following female in-law’s quote is illustrative:

*After I had children, I saw that my status has changed. I got more respect and more admiration. For example, if I did not have children, [...] then my husband would think that I could not have children. [...] It is a tradition. So, having children has given me more chance to participate (HH12, daughter-in-law of male household head).*

## ii) *The Influence of Matrilineality*

Counter to our expectations, we did not notice substantial differences between male and female headed households in the matrilineal Luguru community. However, while matrilineal practices were still present among the Luguru community in Mlali, we also detected that neither matrilineal inheritance patterns nor matrilocal practices were frequently applied (see also Englert, 2008; Hartley & Kaare, 2001; Hymas, 2000). Various respondents pointed out that one of the reasons for the decline was the gradual decrease in marriage among relatives (in particular between cousins). While it used to be common practice, in our study we only came across two cases: one older couple mentioned that they were not only husband and wife, but also cousins, while in the second case, the “extended” household member, a niece, was a relative of both the “core” household head and his spouse. A second reason highlighted by some of the respondents was intermarriages among different ethnic communities, which led to traditions and norms from other communities being followed within Luguru households. Others mentioned that certain practices are also in decline because of globalization, technology, and education:

*The reason might be because of globalization. Life in the past and the way people live right now is different. It is not the same. So, it could be globalization, people changing, leaving their traditions and their norms (HH23, daughter of female household head).*

Although respondents mentioned that matrilineal practices were declining, some traditions were still present. These rituals were considered more important within the Luguru society and less influenced by the factors mentioned above. Various households, for instance, still applied cultural and social rituals regarding girl's menstruation and boy's circumcision. Children also still take the name of the mother's clan, which is in line with prior research (Hamdani, 2002). Moreover, several participants also emphasized that this particular social practice would persist in the future: *'The fact that the children belong to the mother's clan, will always be there. That will keep existing'* (HH16 male household head). Giving a child the grandmother's name is also considered to increase children's well-being. According to this practice, a sick baby will recover if it is given the grandmother's name.

Interestingly, respondents themselves differed in their opinion regarding the link between matrilineality and women's intrahousehold position. While some respondents thought that globalization and a changing society benefitted women's participation in decision-making, others mentioned that Luguru traditions gave women more power and responsibilities within the household. Different participants emphasized that, in particular, women had more responsibilities regarding children and kinship matters because the clan was based on the mother's line. These findings lend support to previous studies (Hamdani, 2002; Hartley & Kaare, 2001). For example, one woman illustrated her responsibilities as follows:

*My child is based on my clan and because of this practice my husband was given small responsibilities with the child. [...] The husband had the right to say, "that is not my child", because it is my clan, not his clan. This gave a woman more power in decisions, but only regarding her children. With everything else like land, assets, and ... No. The power is still with the father (HH18, daughter of female household head).*

In this way, matrilineal practices might be one explanation for the slightly higher participation levels of female "extended" household members within decision-making domains regarding children and family matters. Furthermore, several "extended" household members, that is, cousins and siblings, explained that the household who took care of them was usually from the mother's side, which they related to matrilineal practices still being present in their life. In addition, one female head explained that she included members of her extended household because of a Luguru tradition: *'Their parents have passed away. [...] Well, the Lugurus have a tradition, like if you neglect a person whose loved ones left them, whose loved ones died, then the ghost will haunt you'* (HH19, female household head).

## **Conclusion**

This research analysed intrahousehold relationships and decision-making processes in extended household structures in the matrilineal Luguru community in the Morogoro Region of

Tanzania. A review of intrahousehold decision-making literature has shown that most studies usually only consider two decision-makers, namely husband and wife (Chang et al., 2003; Doss, 2013). However, in this study, we found that “extended” household members such as grandparents, cousins, siblings, and in-laws influence intrahousehold relationships and decision-making processes. This research specifically focused on how and why adult “extended” household members participate in different domains of decision-making, and in which way the usual determinants of bargaining power (gender, assets, education, age, ...) and social norms affect their participation. Furthermore, we were interested in the differences and similarities between their participation in male-headed and female-headed extended households. In order to explore these research questions, the study adopted a qualitative approach and collected data from primary sources: 2 key expert interviews, 76 life story interviews from extended and core household members of 24 households, 24 (household) participatory spider diagram exercises, and participant observation, as well as various secondary sources.

The findings indicate that both female and male-headed household structures are complex and often contain different sub-units which leads to decision-making taking place at different levels: in the separate decision-making units that function as autonomous sub-economies and at a higher level, “extended” household members mainly adopt an advisory role. Our research findings also highlight that the involvement of “extended” household members varies across different decision-making domains with, regardless of their own gender and that of the household head, participation more pronounced in the areas of agriculture (minor decisions), money management, and children & family matters in comparison to employment outside the household and more generally labour allocation, and access/control over land/assets and agriculture (major decisions). Comparing male and female headed households shows similar patterns of “extended” household members’ involvement in the following domains: agricultural sector, money management, and children in contrast to labour allocation, family matters, and access/control over assets. Furthermore, within each decision-making domain, there were considerable variations in participation depending on age, gender, and the specific position of the “extended” household member. In this regard, social identities such as gender, age, and marital status clearly construct social relationships that reinforce or neutralize each other’s effects (Shields, 2008; Van Aelst & Holvoet, 2016) which endorses the importance of adopting an intersectional perspective in relation to this topic.

Finally, our study also shows that matrilineal practices in the Luguru community are declining. At first sight there is little substantial gender-differentiated influence except for the fact that “external” household members are usually from the female “core” member’s side and that women in particular have more responsibilities regarding children and kinship matters because the clan is based on the mother’s line.

This research clearly highlights that intrahousehold relationships and decision-making processes encompass more than spouses alone. Additional research is needed to further explore whether and to what extent this may also be the case beyond our specific research setting of a matrilineal community.

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